

Skin cancer - the symptoms and treatment

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According to Cancer Research UK, there are around 156,000 cases of non-melanoma skin cancer diagnosed in the UK each year.¹ And for melanoma skin cancer, there around 17,500 new cases a year in the UK.²

WHAT CAUSES MALIGNANT MELANOMA?

There is one main preventable factor that increases the risk of developing melanoma - UV light (radiation). UV light comes from the sun or sunbeds. But some people are more at risk of getting melanoma than others.

MOLES AND MELANOMA

Moles are clusters of cells that produce a pigment in the skin and it is normal to have them. Melanomas develop when those cells behave abnormally and invade the skin around moles or spread to other areas such as the lymph nodes, liver and lungs. The more moles on the body, the higher the risk of melanoma, however, that doesn't mean that someone will definitely get melanoma if they have lots of moles. But it is advised they certainly keep a watchful eye on all their moles.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

All melanomas do not look the same and there are several different types. Follow the 'ABCDE' rule below as a melanoma may show one or more of the following features:

- A - asymmetry (an irregular shaped mole)
- B - borders (ragged edges)
- C - colour change or a mole that is a different colour in one part than in another
- D - diameter (any increase in size, but particularly more than about 6mm across)
- E - elevation (raising from the surface, especially if it is irregularly raised)

WHO IS AT RISK?

High risk groups include those with fair skin who burn easily, people with lots of moles, those with a family history of melanomas, those who were sunburnt in childhood and those with a weakened immune system.



1. *Non-melanoma skin cancer statistics – Cancer Research UK*
2. *Melanoma skin cancer statistics – Cancer Research UK*

TREATMENT

If diagnosed with skin cancer, the specialist will determine the best treatment and care for the member.

Treatment is likely to depend on:

- The type of skin cancer
- How far it's grown or spread
- Where the cancer is
- The stage of the cancer (if relevant)

The specialist will discuss treatment options, their benefits and the possible side effects with the member.

SUPPORT

A cancer diagnosis, and even the prospect of one, can be an extremely stressful and worrying time for an individual and their loved ones. Therefore, take comfort in knowing PHC have dedicated cancer nurses available, via the phone, to provide support from day one.

PHC's cancer services

Dedicated cancer nurses

If an individual is diagnosed with cancer, we can put them in touch with our Dedicated Nurse Service because we know that a swift diagnosis and prompt treatment access must go hand in hand with genuine help, support and understanding from people who truly care.

Every one of our friendly nurses understands what a diagnosis like this means. The individual might take comfort in discussing their symptoms or talking through how to break the news to the people they care about. Whatever they need, wherever they need it, one of the dedicated nurses is waiting to talk.

Check4Cancer

A provider of PHC, they'll make sure the member is seen quickly if they suspect cancer.

